TAFT TALK

No. 61 *Newsletter of the Taft Family Association* Dec 2011

Walter DeWitt Taft, Eliza Caroline (Frazier) Taft and Lewis Bigelow Taft. (Source: Larimer County Water Ways: history.fcgov.com/waterways by Larimer County Digitization Initiatiive, 2001)

Georgetown, CO and its Taft connections

In 1991 long time TFA member Mary Johnson sent us a list of Taft miners from "The Rocky Mountain Directory of Colorado Gazetteer" for 1871, published in TTT no 21 (Nov 1991 p 5). This spring, armed with the list, your editor and spouse took the occasion of a wedding in the west to visit Georgetown, CO to learn more about W. Dewitt and Lewis B Taft, who were on that list.

The first discovery of silver in Colorado was made in 1864, about eight miles north of Georgetown and by1885 the population of the town had reached 3,000. Today Georgetown is a small community in the midst of spectacular Colorado scenery with dramatic mountain backdrops. The Visitor Center and the Georgetown Royal Gorge Route Railroad as well as the preserved buildings make this a delightful place to visit, even for a few hours.

Walter DeWitt Taft (1832-1917), Lewis Bigelow Taft (1839-1915), and Preston Alphonso Taft (1844-1923) were sons of Polly S. Graves and Ira (James Sibley, Nathan, Daniel, Daniel, Robert) Taft. Although Walter was born in Oneida, NY, the family moved to Swanzey, NH soon after his birth. "In 1861 Walter journeyed to Denver on a wagon pulled by an ox team. His brother ... joined him and together they moved to Virginia City, MT in 1863." A year later they moved to the Laporte, CO area. Meanwhile Preston headed west lured by the glowing descriptions and opportunities told by his brothers. Joining up with a cattle driver, he reached the Cache la Poudre valley in the fall of 1865. In the spring he left with his brother-in-law Chamberlain to establish a ranch on the Laramie River in Fort Sanders. At that time their merchandise was valued at $12,000; however in Oct 1866 they were raided by Indians, two men killed, so the ranch was abandoned. Since Preston had left the day before he was safe and already on his way to join his brothers.

See p. 7 for continuation

Dr. William Howard "Bill" Taft (1915-2011)

Journalist, Educator, Community Leader

Rosemary (Taft) McLaren sent us an article about "Bill" Taft. She noted that they hadn't figured out how they might be related. As it turns out Rosemary is in the Robert line and Bill in the Thomas line.

Dr. William Howard "Bill" Taft, 95, of Columbia, MO passed away Monday 21 Feb 2011 at Lenoir Woods, and was buried in Columbia Cemetery. He was born 24 Oct 1915 in Mexico, MO, the son of Raymond Edward and Ferrie F. (Davis) Taft. His parents received a letter from President Taft thanking them for naming their son after him; and in 1927 he actually met then Supreme Court Chief Justice Taft.

Bill Taft was a graduate of Westminster College (1937), the University of Missouri journalism (1938), master's degree (1939), and his doctorate from Western Reserve University (OH) in 1951. During his career he was associated with Hiram, Youngstown and Defiance Colleges before establishing the department of journalism at Memphis State College (now the University of Memphis). In 1956 he became a faculty member of the University of Missouri and taught more than 10,000 students before his retirement. He received numerous awards for his work and was inducted into the Missouri Press Association Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2001.

Bill Taft authored 12 books, co-authored several others, and wrote encyclopedia, magazine articles and book reviews. His books concerned Missouri newspapers, American magazines and 20th century journalists. "Wit and Wisdom of Missouri's Country Editors" appeared in 1996, a collection of 600 interesting items from old Missouri newspapers. His "Show-me Journalists: The First 200 Years" appeared in 2003. In late 2006 he completed an updated history of the Missouri United Methodist Church in Columbia. In 2008 his book, "Created in Heaven: A Love Story" was a tribute of his and Myrtle's nearly 70 years together. In late 2009 his final book "They Don't Write Like This Any More' is a collection of stories through the centuries. Dr. Richard Brownlee, Director of the State Historical Society, wrote that Taft's book "Missouri Newspapers: When and Where 1808-1963" in a research sense "was the most important book the Society has ever published." [Note: It is still used by genealogists.]

Bill Taft served nearly five years in WW II, where he was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant in the Infantry. Transferred to the Air Force, by early 1945 he was in Pratt, KS with a B-29 group as its intelligence officer. "His group was headed for the Pacific when President Harry Truman ordered the dropping of the atomic bomb. Taft often credited Truman's act with possibly saving his life, along with millions of others."

For 30 years he wrote a weekly Sunday school lesson syndicated to newspapers. He had a lifelong association with newspapers, starting with the Mexico Ledger while in high school. He covered his own college graduation, publicizing the commencement speech by FBI Chief J Edgar Hoover. In the early 1960s he judged a thousand or more school yearbooks each year for a national scholastic association and gave numerous talks for yearbook advisers and staff members.

Bill Taft was honored as Kiwanian of the Year for his many years of dedicated volunteerism. A charter member of the Columbia Track Club, "Bill Taft was known for his race walking, though he seldom won. Among his hobbies in retirement were reading mystery novels, making fudge and finding four-leaf clovers, more than a thousand in 2009." In retirement his "home away from home" was the Missouri Press Association.

Bill Taft is survived by his wife Myrtle and their three children, Marie Margolin and her husband Christopher of Portola Valley, CA; Bill Taft and his wife Christine of Prairie Village, KS; and Alice Fisher and her husband Charles of Campbell, TX; four grandchildren, Larry Taft of Kansas City, Michael Taft of Austin, TX, Linda Medina of Dallas, and Matthew Margolin of NYC; and four gt-grandchildren.

William Howard Taft was the son of Ferrie F. Davis and Raymond Edward (Edwin R., Edwin R., Luther, Artemas, Isaac, Thomas, Robert) Taft.

(Source: Columbia (MO) Daily Tribune article and photo)

1902 – 1908 Firemen's musters and county fairs in New York

At the turn of the century firemen's musters and competitions at county fairs were big draws and involved enthusiastic participants from large and small communities. One of those companies was the Williamstown's Firemen, established by Charley Taft.

"There is a sheriff in charge of the Oswego county jail at Oswego which used to run a country drug store and sell things that cured humanity. His name is Charley Taft, and his neighbors back home wouldn't be saying "Howd'y Sheriff?" to him now if he hadn't been ambitious.

"Ten years ago Mr. Taft opened a drug store in Williamstown. This is a one-street village with the street running like a woman trying to catch a hen... Mr. Taft had a lot of spare time on his hands. He used it by organizing a fire department, although the folks hadn't calculated on having any fires."

Most of the firemen, ages ranging from 15 to 18, were drawn from the surrounding farms which meant they had to get themselves into town every night after the chores were done. They apparently learned their drills well and were soon outfitted in maroon uniforms with gold trim and helmets. Their first attempt was at the Oswego county fair where they won $100 in gold and another prize for best looking company in line. "That was in 1903, a year still anathematized by Williamstown farmers because ¾ of the corn and potato crops were planted in circles, figure eights and half moons by boys who had just joined the fire department and who went through their military maneuvers while planting the crops." The next year they went to Rome, NY and again won all the drills among the volunteer firemen. The following year they again beat out the competition including the Fort Daytons of Herkimer.

In 1906 Charley Taft took his team to the Syracuse State Fair where they competed against the state champions, the White Hose Company of South Glens Falls, who had previously won the fancy drills and were "drilled well nigh to perfection for that event and went to Syracuse in fine fettle... Charley Taft's boys had just got out of the hay fields a few evenings and limbered up on the sawdust pile. But they went into the drills with a spirit and expertness that swept every opposition away. It was easy work beating eight of the companies, but they nosed the Glens Falls company... by only three points. The home town burst its buttons off in celebration..." By then their company had become a main attraction at all the county fairs and for seven years they won every championship even though large companies hired military experts to train their firemen, the competition having become so fierce.

In 1908 Charley Taft became sheriff on the Republican ticket. His new job took him away from the town much of the time. Apparently the firemen decided it wouldn't be the same without him so they disbanded. But what a ride it had been!

Sources: article: Rome Daily Sentinel 1910; New York Sun; photo: en.wikipedia.com (1905 REO fire truck)

Howd'y Sheriff:

So who was Charley Taft? Charles Wesley Taft was born 4 May 1866 in Constantia or Bernhards Bay, NY the son of Dorcas Stratton and Leander (Stephen, Stephen, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft. From 1879 to 1883 he spent his summer seasons working on the lakes and the St. Lawrence River, his father being a farmer and shipbuilder who designed and built many of the first boats on the Erie Canal. Charley graduated from the College of Pharmacy of NY, worked as a druggist in Oneida and then opened his own store in Williamstown, NY as well as serving as the postmaster. He was elected sheriff of Oswego County in 1908, became the chairman of the County Republican Committee, and Deputy Secretary of State. He was a candidate for Secretary of State in 1924 but withdrew in support of the other candidate. Charles Wesley Taft married Mrs. Mabel (Wells) Sherman. At his death on 19 Feb 1929 in Oneida, NY he was survived by his widow and his sister Mrs. Frank Marsden of Long Island.

Charley Taft was described in an article concerning George Eddy who was arrested for shooting a man. Handcuffed to Sheriff Charles W. Taft, they marched to court. "By some mental telepathy the crowd knew that Eddy had arrived and hundreds surged around in hopes of getting a look at the prisoner. Sheriff Taft, who like his namesake, is quite a portly gentleman, completely shielded Eddy, who is a small man, and the crowd was disappointed..."

Sources: Genealogical and Family History of Central NY pp 367-68; The Journal and Republican, Lowville, NY 21 Feb 1929 obituary; Watertown Daily Times 6 Dec 1909.

In Memoriam

Ruth Lapworth Taft

Ruth (Lapworth) Taft, formerly of 13 Leland Street, Grafton, MA, passed away 13 Jan 2010 at St. Camillus Health Center, Whitinsville, MA. Ruth was the wife of 51 years of the late Norman M. Taft who preceded her in 1991.

Ruth Lapworth was born 7 Oct 1914 in Hopedale, MA, the daughter of the late Clarence and Lillian (Spicer) Lapworth. Ruth was the devoted mother of five sons, Richard Dickinson (Marie) of Lancaster, MA, the late Thomas Dickinson (Joan) of Oxford, MA, Joel L. Taft (Ursula) of Tiverton, RI, Norman M. Taft (Anne) of Easthampton, MA, and George A. Taft (Paula) of Grafton. She also leaves ten grandchildren, five gt-grandchildren and one gt-gt grandchild. Ruth was predeceased by her son Thomas Dickinson, a sister Virginia (Lapworth) Gunn of Camden, ME, her brother Clarence "Kip" Lapworth, of Middlebury,VT, and a grandson, Jacob Taft of Tiverton, RI.

"Ruth had a love for flowers and the ocean, vacationing at Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras with her family. She was a private person who enjoyed being a wife, mother and grandmother. She enjoyed playing her piano, which the family will miss hearing."

Her husband, Norm Taft, was a frequent contributor to Taft Tree Talk over the years and was well-known in the Worcester area as a raconteur among his many talents. Norman Mortimer Taft was the son of Arthur Earl (George Henry, Joel, Joel, Silas, Israel, Robert, Robert) Taft.

(Sources: www.thefreelibrary.com)

Where is he now?

Our foreign service cousin, R. David Neiss, has returned from Pakistan and is now assigned as a member of the staff to the Foreign Service Institute, National Foreign Affairs Training Center, Arlington, VA. He will be retiring next summer from a career that has led him to many fascinating areas of the world.

How much are we worth?

New member Geraldine Howard, when asked if she knew her family line, mentioned that "at one time we had a family tree done by Maude's (her grandmother Maude Gertrude Taft) sister Dora which was quite large... The last we knew of the family tree my uncle had had it restored and two weeks later it was stolen..."

That's a new one for us – did you realize how valuable we are!!

By the way Geraldine is a descendant of Daniel Taft.

We would love to hear from you – photos, stories, you name it, we are interested.

And better yet how about writing an article for this newsletter – no financial reward but lots of good will!

Neither rain nor snow ... nor postal strike...

Our mailing of the June issue of TTT was stymied for a bit in getting to Canada – with the Canadian strike our local post office was not accepting any mail for Canada. Apparently anything already sent was languishing at the border. But eventually the TTT made its way to our cousins up north.

We hope this didn't inconvenience you too much.

An every-name index for TTTs

We now have an every-name index for the Taft Tree Talk beginning with 1981 (TTT #1). This spreadsheet index contains the volume, date and page of the issue, every name (only listed once per page), the article, the dates of birth/death and parents of the individual where known, and the brother from whom the person is descended. In addition we have been adding the full text of the information from the TTTs into the various GEDCOM files when possible. There is still some refining of the database to be done, but we can now locate previous references to individuals which should help our research work.

Next on the agenda is to add the information accumulated by Tom Collins and the California Taft Family Association as well as the many file cabinets containing Dick Messinger's correspondence with family members.

As always information about your family is wanted – so please feel free to send us updates and photos.

A brief respite in WW II

Sometimes soldiers found inspiration in exotic places even while away from their loved ones. Thanks to Russ Selwood for sending this typed letter from Dick Messinger to his family [note: Aunt Bea was Beatrice Taft (1895-1995) d/o George Mather and Emma Agnes (Moore) Taft, the grandparents of Dick Messinger]. The letter was dated 30 Dec 1943 from the Mobile Training Unit #21 in Natal, Brazil:

Richard Taft Messinger 1943 (photo sent in by Russell Selwood)

Dear Folks,

Don't know just how long this will be tonight, because it is getting late, and these barracks are not exactly soundproof. The fellows next door will be wanting to get some sleep and just about as I find myself warming up and remembering the many things I have to tell you, - they will be yelling over 'Cut that out!"...

Have been in Natal, Brazil for a few days now and intend to spend some time there... Of course I don't expect [mail] if I don't write myself, though. It takes seven days to reach us here they tell me – and that isn't bad.

Sort of hate to be away over the holidays again, - but c'est la guerrre! Christmas Eve was pleasantly spent, including a party at ATC in the Floridian lobby and singing many carols around a beautiful tree there. Christmas night saw me enjoying a delicious turkey dinner with most of the fixin's as well as good sweet milk and pumpkin pie. Don't hold out too much hope for New Year's Day, but they will probably have extra special grub here too. On New Year's Eve... several of us plan to go into town; don't know what we'll find, but there may be some sort of celebration. I imagine it will be a far cry from Times Square – but the future days are going to be so much like one another that it will be a relief to see something a little different.

We find the usual attitude here – the fellows say they don't like it, - but it is purely and simply homesickness. A good many of them have been here a long, long time, but from what I've seen it is really a wonderful base.... We have a good many things that you don't too – bananas, pineapple, cocoa, silk and the like. Leather and shoes are plentiful and very reasonable, good Swiss watches can be bought cheaply, and gems are plentiful. You can probably find a reason for this situation: the sudden and continued influx of American money seems to account for it. And at the same time it is raising the Brazilian standard of living tremendously. Whereas a few months ago servants were receiving one milreis (.05) a day, now they must have five. The monetary system is confusing, but only because the Government is revising it at this time. It used to be reis (hay-s) and milreis (1000 reis) and now they contemplate using Cruiseros and Centavos. We mix up the two sets, but they have the same values.

The fruit is absolutely unbeatable, just cut open a pineapple and go to it; it's as sweet as ours back home were after overnight sugar soaking, and has a nicer flavor too. The bananas look green, but are nevertheless ripe and very luscious. Coffee is very black and very strong, but I have already learned to like it, - with sugar and cream yet, however. Understand that it is straight bean, rather than blended as at home. Meals at the base are .50 regardless of the time of day, - mess hall being open 24 hours. And one can always go in for just coffee (for free) at any time. Plenty to eat and it's good, - at the base; however, eating in town is just inviting dysentery, even at the hotels.

We're rapidly picking up a smattering of Portuguese, which is the only language in Brazil – and are amazed at its similarity to French and Spanish. One can always say "qu'est-ca?" pointing simultaneously and receive the ... equivalent... We have all native servants at the base, and they know a few of the more common English words. The fellow in charge of our barracks (most of the Representatives live in 917) makes our beds, keeps things dusted and clean and does all kinds of errands for us. A package of cigarettes delights him (they cost .05 here), and he is about ready to cut off his arm for a dime. No American money can be spent in Natal, so every night he brings in his change to have one of us convert it into Brazilian.

See p 9 for continuation

Becky Grothe discovered these gravestones in Hillside Cemetery, Clarendon, NY.

To Your Health?

Among the advertisements found in "The New World, A Journal of Health" is one for "Rosenberger's German Magnetic Oil" and D. Skidmore & Co.'s "Renovo" for the restoration of hair, both available from Dr. G. T. Taft & Co.

Another advertisement includes promotional literature for Dr. Taft's Asthmalene, Dr. Taft's Sure Relief, Balm of Gilead and other remedies manufactured by Dr. Taft Brothers.

Source: Annotated Catalogue p 601: The New World vol 3 Jun 1866 no 4), also #3412.

Dr. Taft Brothers

Becky Grothe in her travels this year discovered these gravestones in Hillside Cemetery, Clarendon, Orleans, NY. Of course we had to learn more about Dr. A. S. Taft and his wife. And did we!

It turns out Dr. Albert S. Taft is one of three brothers who were the sons of Sarah Brown and Capt Lewis (Ebenezer, Robert, Matthew) Taft. In 2000 Neil Todd was looking for more information on the Dr. Taft who produced a medicine called Asthmalene (TTT No. 39 (Nov 2000 p 8)).

Albert S. Taft, Gilbert T. and Henry D. Taft were all physicians, the first two graduating from the University of Michigan School of Medicine in the mid 1850s. Together they incorporated the Dr. Taft Brothers Medicine Company in 1868 in Rochester, NY which continued after the untimely death of Gilbert T until Albert's death in 1900. Henry D. Taft meanwhile had moved to Chicago, IL.

In Memoriam

Margaret "Peggy" Darling Iler

Word has reached us that Peggy Iler, long-time member of the TFA, died on 7 Oct 2010 and was buried in the Desert View Cemetery, Winslow, AZ. Margaret Iler was born in Winslow, AZ in a yellow house on Cherry Street where she grew up. She was active in Rainbow Girls and high school activities. Peggy attended business college in California and then met her husband Frank.

Peggy and Mary Bay Bailey opened a ceramic shop called the PM Pot Shop which they ran for many years. In addition she was an active member of Eastern Star, the Hospital Auxiliary and the Friends of the Library. Alert and active until her death, Peggy still held a light plane pilot's license. To quote her obituary "she was one spicy enchilada that one!"

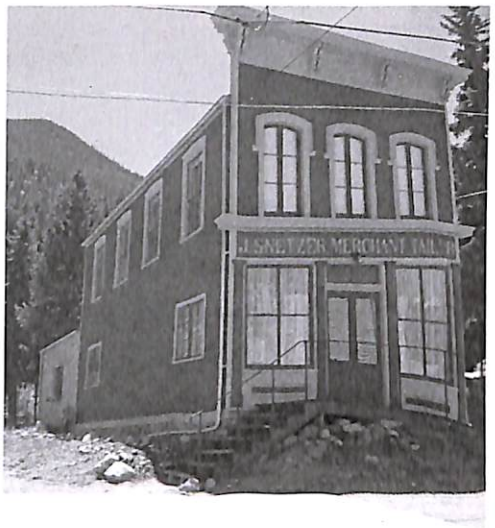
Margaret Iler is survived by her daughter Barbara (Bruce) DeNorch; granddaughters Sara DeNorch, Emily Edwards and Jenny Wirt; three gt-grandchildren and her niece Margaret Davis. She was predeceased by her parents, William and Naomi Darling, her husband Frank Iler, and her sister Elizabeth Davis.

Margaret Iler was featured in TTT No 8 (Jun 1985 p 8) when she was seeking information on her great-grandparents, Ira Potter and Betsey (Taft) Holcomb of Kingsville, OH. More information was given in TTT No 20 (May 1991 p 3) with photographs provided by her of her great-grandparents.

Margaret "Peggy" Darling was the daughter of William B. Darling and Naomi Holcomb (Ira Potter Holcomb Jr, Ira Potter Holcomb, Elizabeth "Betsey" Taft, Ebenezer "Eben" Taft, James Taft, Matthew Taft).

(sources: Find A Grave #60824509)

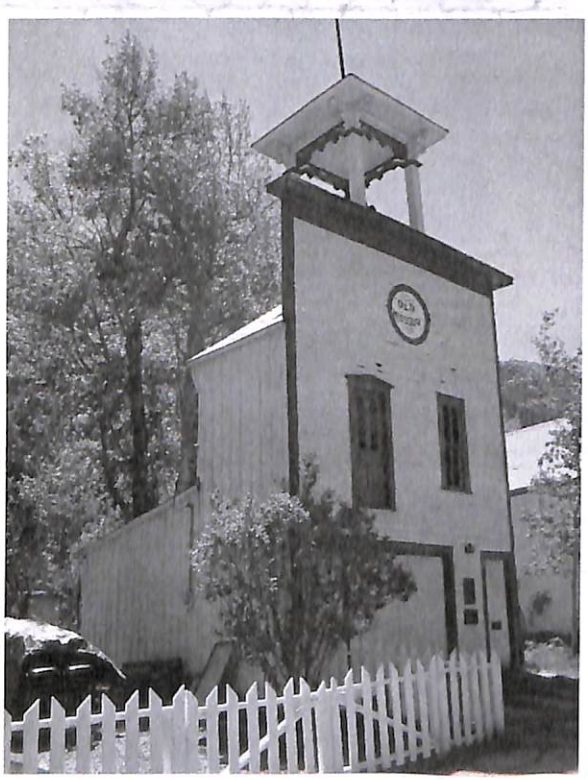
Colorado mining continued



By the 1870 census the brothers were in Georgetown but by 1876 they had moved north to Fort Collins and LaPorte, CO, probably deciding that farming was a much easier way to make a living than mining.

With the aid of Clear Creek County Archivist Christine Bradley we found the Tafts. In 1870 the tax levy for L. B. was $50 poll tax plus one watch, W. DW. poll tax, and Preston A. poll tax plus houses and lots at $1200. The Next two years with similar taxes. Preston A. Taft is the only one listed in 1873 with lots and improvements on ½ of the east ½ of the Comet Lode valued at $1000.00. In 1874 Preston was listed with the south 44' of lots 7 & 8 Blk 19 with house, valued at $1500.00. None are listed in tax lists for 1875.

On 22 Oct 1868 Preston A. Taft bought from C. C. Churchill and wife for $227.40 lot 2 in Blk 50 and lot 2 in Blk 51in Georgetown. On 5 Oct 1868 W. DW. and L. B. Taft, both of Clear Creek Co., CO bought from James O. Allen et al for $400.00 all interest in the Ashuelot and Gunchey Lodes. [Note: the Ashuelot River runs through Swanzey, NH, the previous home of the Tafts. Is there a connection?]. In 1873 the three brothers sold their properties, including W. DW. and Lewis B. Taft selling the east ½ of the comet lode. Preston A. revoked the power of the Comet lode to Lewis B. Taft; and Walter DW. and E Caroline sold to Preston A. Taft 29 Sep 1873 their undivided ¼ of the east 1500 feet of the comet lode. On 24 Nov 1874 Preston A Taft sold his undivided ½ of the east ½ of the Comet load and then his downtown lots (Deeds Z pp 227, 386; 22.66, 21.525, 21.559, 16.488, 31.78, 31.139).



Early 1870 era buildings in downtown Georgetown, CO (Photos: Pat Allen)

The Taft family moved to the LaPorte, CO area to join the extended family including their sisters Sylvia Sophia, Esther Ann, Mary Caroline, and Samantha Melvina and their spouses. Walter DeWitt and his wife along with his brother Louis lived in their Taft hill home, a shingle style house built in two sections. They were buried in the Grandview Cemetery in Ft. Collins, CO.

Preston Taft outlived his brothers and was remembered as "a man among men, a splendid specimen of the noblest man. All who knew him were his friends – enemies he had none. His integrity was unquestioned and his record of fair dealing and upright, honorable living is without a blemish. He was a model husband, father, friend and citizen. Hospitality and good cheer in his home were proverbial. No person was ever turned from his door suffering from hunger or despair. The Cache la Poudre valley has indeed lost a good citizen – one who will be deeply missed in the community in which he had dealt for more than half a century."

(Sources: Rosemary Cashman, Fort Collins Coloradoan, 12-9-78 p A1; Fort Collins Courier

The Comet Lode

The Comet Lode was located high up on the northwest slope of Griffith Mountain, had three shafts located at nearly 11,000 feet above sea level, and had been worked extensively before the Tafts arrived. The walls consisted of altered pegmatite, granite and gneiss as well as jasper and quartz. It became one of the richest silver mines in the district with a total eventual production of $20,000,000 (sad to say, this was after the Tafts left).

Source: Economic Geology... Georgetown, by Josiah Edward Spurr et al; pp 277-279

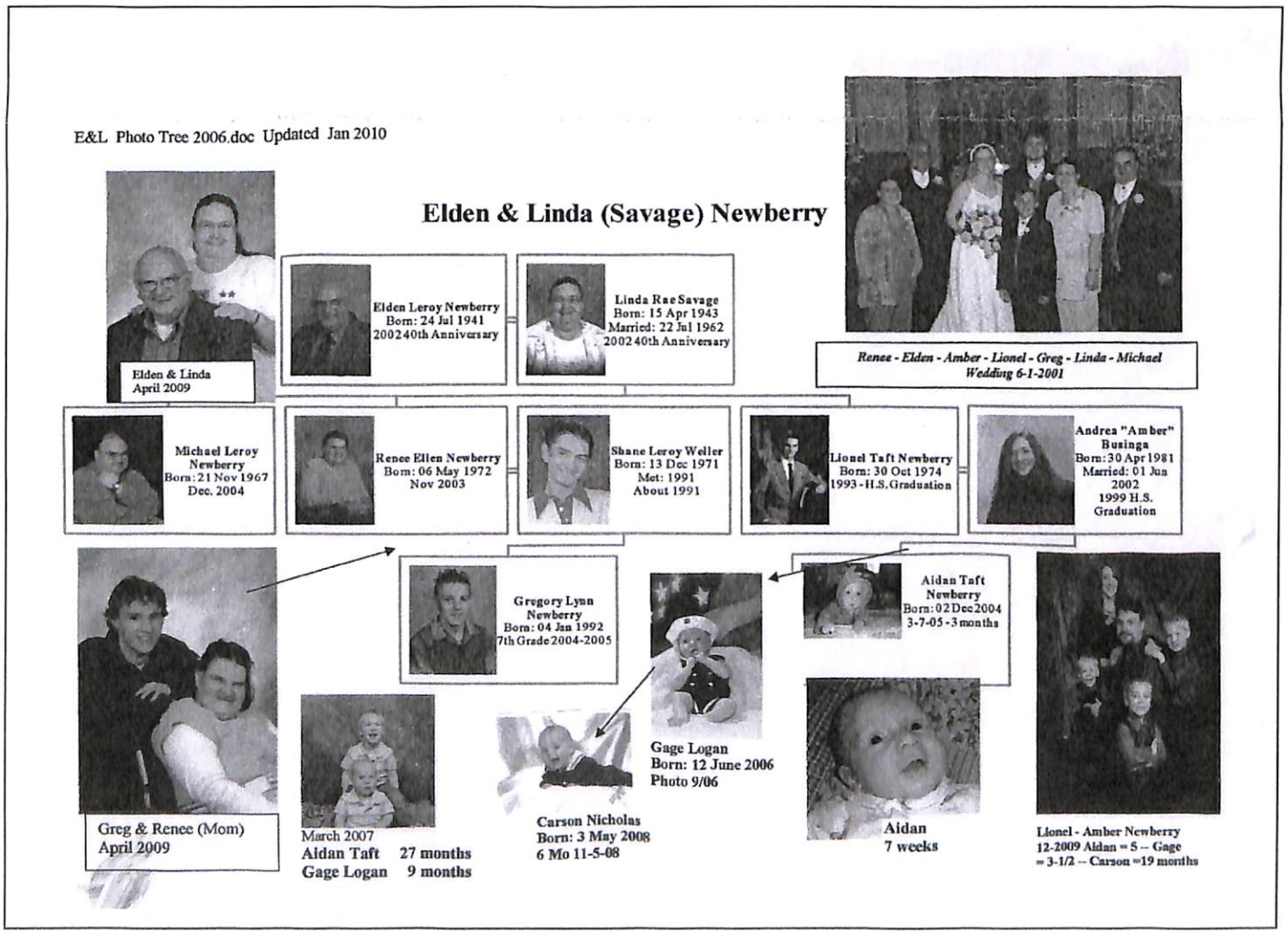
Vibrant, active and positive... that's our Taft cousins

In the past Linda Rae (Savage) Newberry of Scottsbluff, NE has sent information on her family but since 2002 she hasn't worked on genealogy much because of medical problems: her own (asthma, high blood pressure and 2 back surgeries) and her daughter Renee who had a cardiac arrest in 2008 after an asthma attack and seizure and now needs 24/7 care, fortunately ably provided by her family, especially her brother Michael's physical therapy and respite care treatment.

Although this care requires constant supervision, Linda still finds time to do the bookkeeping for the family and business accounts. Lots of books and movies keep them busy as well. Linda is still active in the local genealogy society. She has extensive files on her family including the Sharp line and enclosed for us a wonderful family photo tree (see below: it might give you an idea what can be done although it may be reprinted too small for you to read).

Linda's son Greg graduated from high school and received multiple awards in information technology as well as an early admission scholarship to Western Nebraska Community College. In addition he works at the Country Club and plays several instruments. Their other son Lionel and wife Amber have three boys. Lionel is the technical director for Gering Public Schools. Her husband Elden fixes computer monitors and television sets (flat screens) only. Elden and Linda were able to take a trip and found a Handicap Van in Denver, CO.

Linda Rae Savage is the wife of Elden L Newberry and the daughter of Lynn Marion Savage (Serrel Taft Savage, Heil Savage and Ruth Adelaide Taft, Serrel, Benedict, Mijamin, Nathan, Mijamin, Benjamin, Robert Taft).



World War II letter from Brazil cont.

Photo "Talkin for Jo" crew, Bagby collection; www.angelfire.com "SSgt Wilbur E. Bagby, 489th Bombardment Squadron

It is very hot in the sun, as you can well imagine upon inspecting a map, but a strong cool sea-breeze is in full swing all day long, making the climate excellent. Vegetation is not artificial as in Florida (Miami, I should say) and San Diego, although it is very sandy and, geologically speaking, desert country. On the way down we passed over hundreds and hundreds of miles of jungle; the great expanse of treetops reminded me of the top of an enormous cauliflower, so tightly entwined and level was the growth. Of course the cloud formations and occasional water views were magnificent, - we had ideal weather throughout.

The wind-blown sand already has occasioned use of the pillow-cover you so thoughtfully sent; I really appreciate it.

I hope that you've all had a pleasant Christmas season, and that it was a white Christmas… Reports have been that the cold is really settling in early again this year up North; what was it last week, 15 degrees below in New York? I really think it mean of me to mention that it averages about 80 here, - but that's it. Nights are about 65-70, I'd guess, - ideal. All of which makes me think of the time element, - we are two hours advanced here, - it is 1:00 A.M. here and 11:00 P.M. in New England. It's going to be considerably different before we're through however.

Several of the enlisted men here have obtained monkeys from the natives. Cute little devils, most of them – they seem to come in all sizes, - from the tiny banana or spider monkey which you can hold entirely in your hand to young gorillas. They're quite intelligent and make good pets. Then there are the honey bears, - but I haven't gotten one yet. Several have also bought donkeys and you can buy a good riding horse for less than twenty-five dollars. It might be a problem to get rid of the creatures upon leaving, but in most cases the value would be more than received. Cows and cattle abound about the post; I can hear several moos and bell-tinklings at the moment. We have no milk, however, in spite of the cows around….

Give my best regards to everyone when you write or see them, Aunt Bea – and drop a few lines please….

Love, Dick

Natal, Brazil

Because of its strategic position (Natal is one of the cities in Brazil nearest to Western Europe and Africa, especially Dakar, Senegal), an American air base was built in a suburb of Natal named Parnamirim during World War II as part of the so-called Operation Rainbow; this base provided support for allied troops combating in the north of Africa. Thousands of American soldiers were sent to Natal, and their presence left traces in the culture of the city.

(Source: en.wikipedia.org)

Franklin D. Roosevelt with Getulio Vargas (seated behind) visiting Parnamirim (source: photo from www.natal-brazil.com: Natal in the World War II)

Taft Family Association Officers

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Annual dues of $8 per family are due and payable each year on or before June.
(Your dues are paid through the year on your mailing label.)